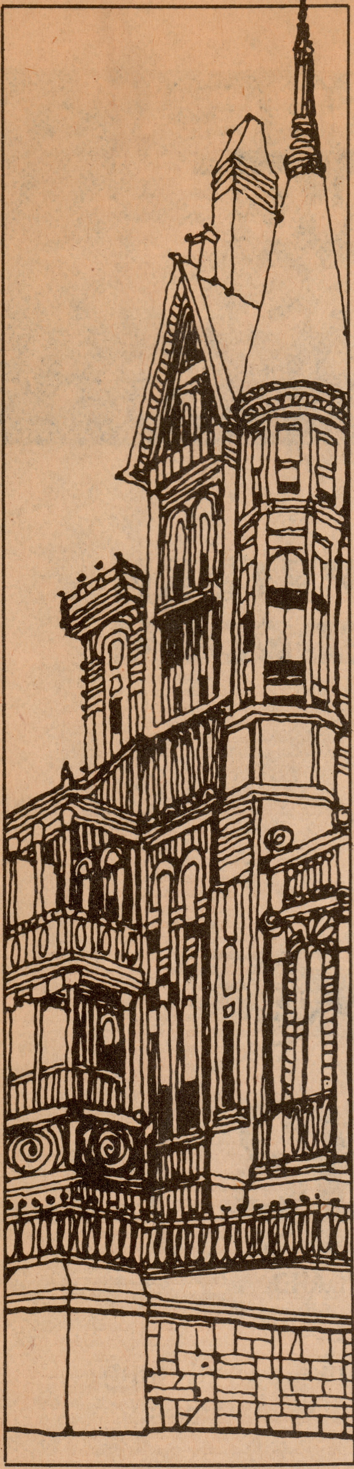
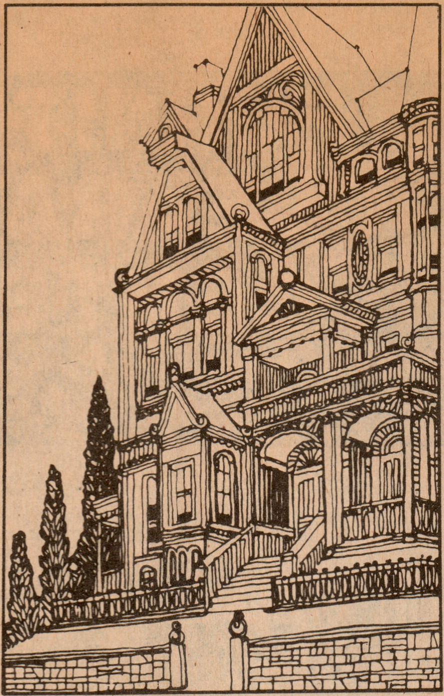
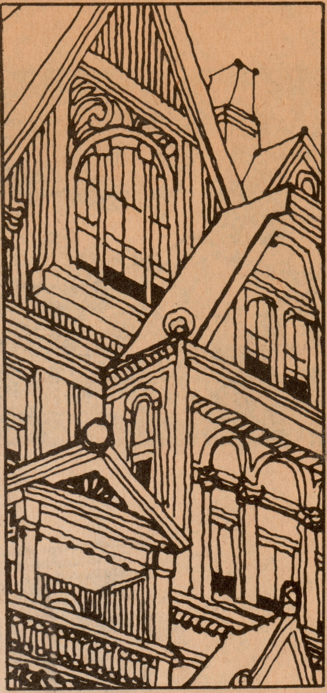
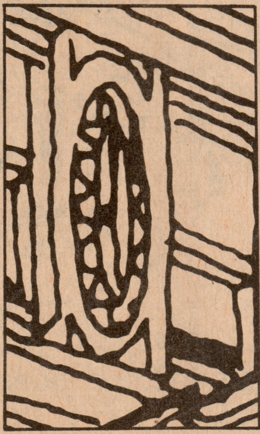
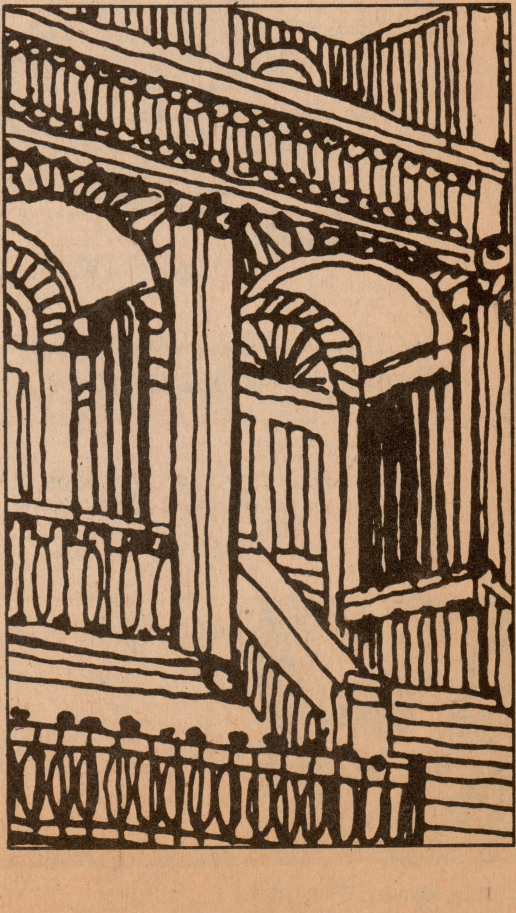






RENTERS' REVIEW





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to the Eastern Echo

March 28, 1980

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Special thanks to Derek Hurt and the Ypsilanti Tenants' Union for their cooperation in the production of this supplement.

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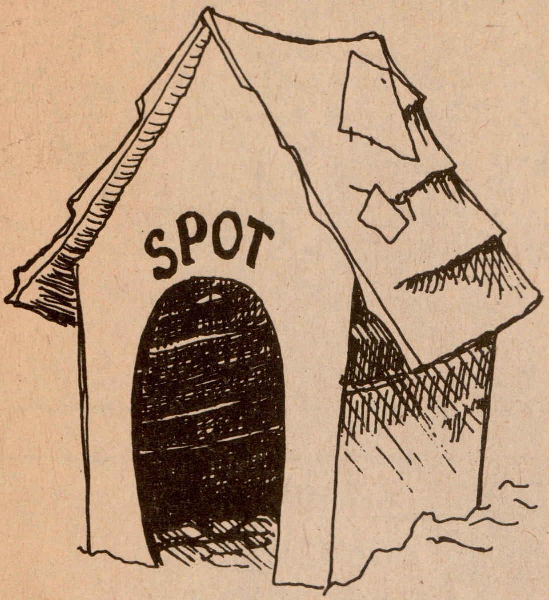

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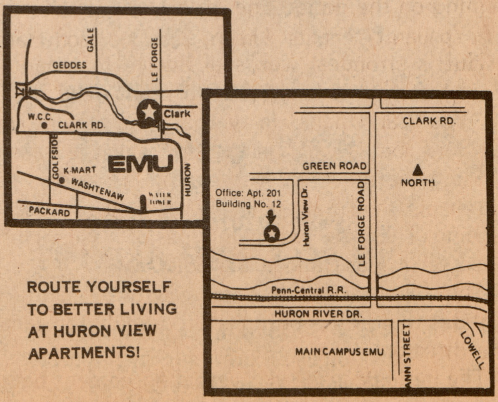
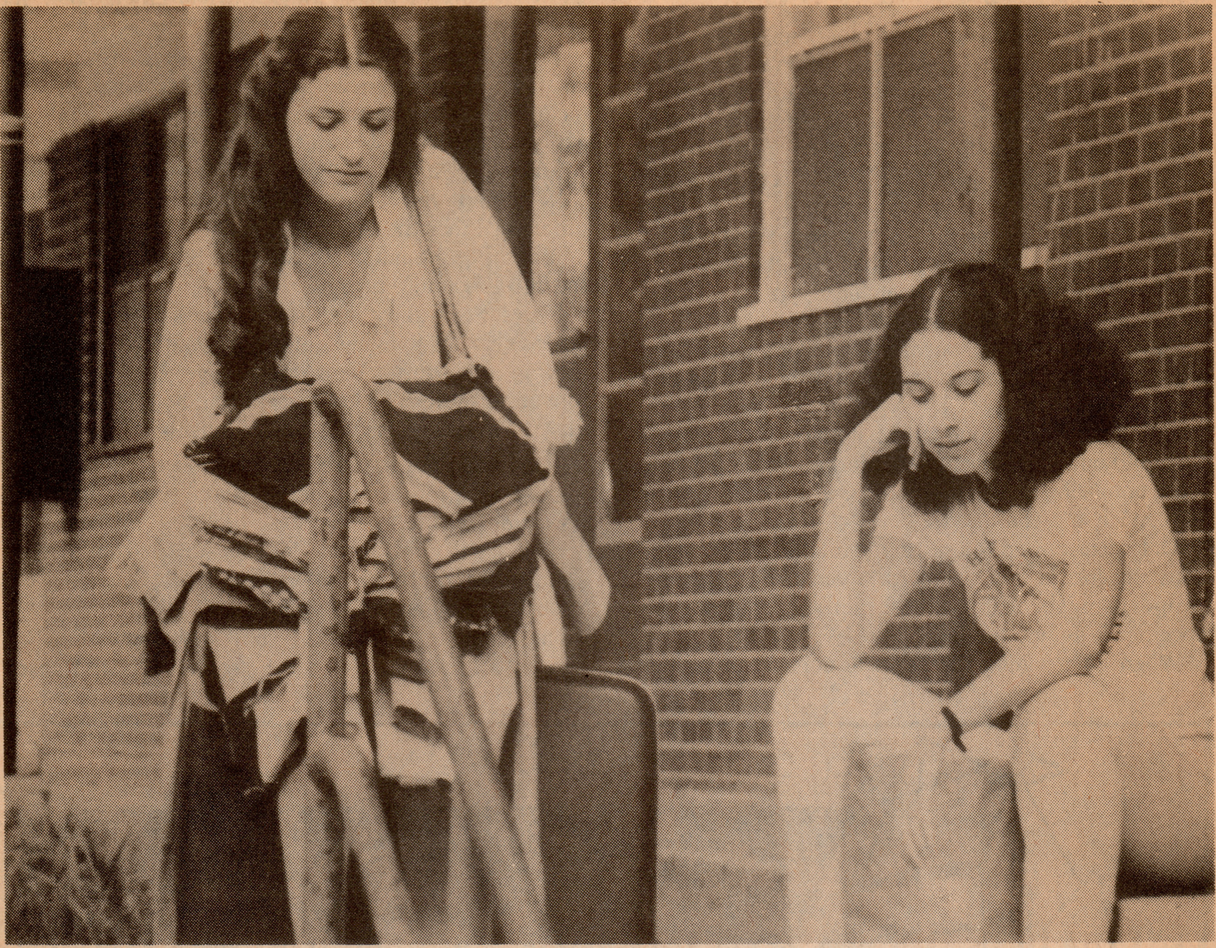


ROUTE YOURSELF
TO BETTER LIVING
AT HURON VIEW
APARTMENTS!

Tenants' union offers advice



Signing a lease, in many ways, is like signing a marriage license. As a wise ''spouse,'' the tenant should know the prospective house and legal responsibilities as thoroughly as possible.

First-time tenants, especially, should take the time to learn of the rights, responsibilties, pleasures and potential problems involved in renting.

Whether renting a house or an apartment, the tenant should always know what the lease includes before signing on the dotted line, said Derek Hurt, director of the Ypsilanti Tenants' Union, 235 Goodison Hall.

Hurt's strongest words of advice to tenants, are to ''not just sign a lease, but to really read it.''

''You can make (a verbal) agreement with the landlord, but it won't stand up'' since a lease is more binding that a verbal agreement, he said.

Tenants should also know which kind of lease they are signing. There are two main types of leases, Hurt said, a fixed term lease and a periodic lease.

The fixed term lease is a written contract which dictates that ''all conditions will remain the same,'' said the director.

The periodic lease is a verbal agreement between the tenant and landlord—and is just as binding, Hurt said.

According to Hurt, there are advantages to both of the lease types. ''The periodic lease is for people who want flexibility, but the fixed term lease is for people who want security,'' he said.

With the fixed term lease the tenant knows exactly how much time is left on the lease and what to expect from the landlord.

Both the tenant and the landlord are bound by the lease terms; to break it before the expiration date, court action may be necessary if both parties do not agree to cancel.

The periodic lease allows more flexibility in renting time. If the tenant wishes to move, under the periodic lease he/she merely gives the landlord 30 days notice.

However, the landlord has the same privilege. If he wants the tenant to move, he issues a notice that he wishes ''to retain his possessions,'' Hurt said. Under the law the tenant must move.

Another important consideration that tenants should be aware of is the presence of unconscionable clauses.

These clauses are those included in a lease that are illegal. Under the Truth in Renting Act which went into effect last July, all leases must comply with the act.

Some of the more common unconscionable clauses, state that the tenant will give up the right to a jury trial

see **WATCH page 6**

Watch out for fishy clauses

(continued from page 5)

or pay attorney fees in the case of a dispute, or that the tenant agrees to release the landlord from repair duties. None of these charges are binding according to the act.

If the tenant notices suspicious clauses, he/she might check out their legality before signing.

Hurt stressed that "you don't have to accept a lease as it is."

However, if the tenant becomes too insistent and the landlord remains resistant to changing the lease, Hurt said, "The landlord might say 'Just get on out' since everyone wants to rent around here."

Other areas to watch out for when signing a lease are extra charges, clauses about pets and the amount of the security deposit.

The tenant should find out what any extra charges are for. Find out whether pets are allowed before signing a lease or moving in, whether there is a charge for pets and how much the charge is.

The security deposit, a refundable amount a tenant pays to insure the landlord against destruction of property or breach of contract, is covered very specifically under the law.

When determining the security deposit amount, the law states that the landlord can only charge one and one-half the monthly rent.

When looking at extra charges, such as a carpet cleaning fee, Hurt said to make sure they are not included in the security deposit. He also added that such extra fees cannot be automatically deducted from the security deposit when the tenant moves.

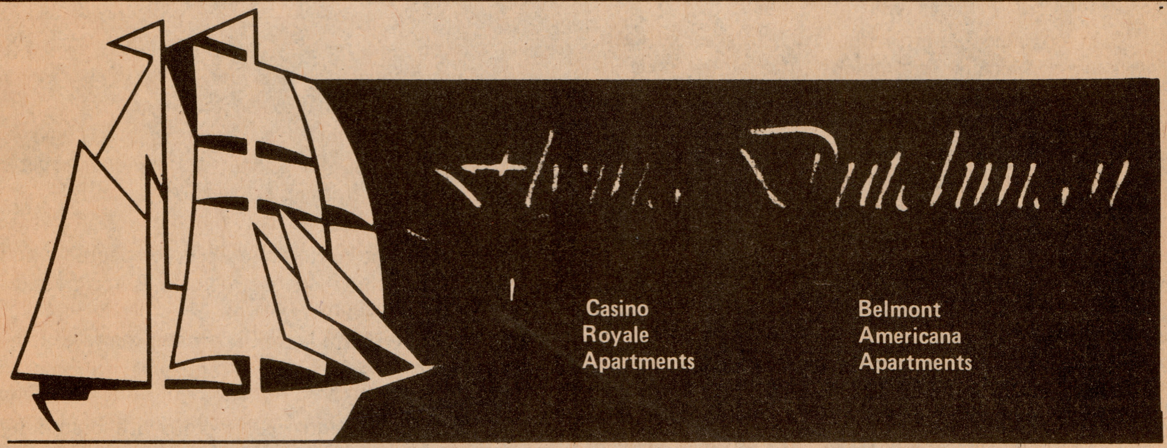
Returning the security deposit is "the biggest problem," that the Ypsilanti Tenants Union deals with. "Either they are not being returned or not being paid in the full amount," he said.

In order to receive the full amount of the deposit, the tenant also has to follow guidelines. Within four days of moving out, the tenant must give the landlord a forwarding address. However, the landlord is required to give the tenant notice that he/she must leave the address

"Landlords are required to give you notice that you must leave a forwarding address within four days, but it's usually written in the lease that you must do that. And if you don't read the lease...? That's their (landlords) technical way of getting out of (the responsibility) that they told you."

The tenant must agree to any deductions that the

see **INVENTORY** page 7



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Inventory checklist helpful

(continued from page 6)

landlord takes from the deposit for damages. He must submit to the tenant within seven days the damages and amount of deduction. The tenant must then agree. If after seven days, the tenant does not contest the damage list, his/her agreement is assumed.

Before moving in, the tenant should also ask if an inventory checklist is available. The checklist tells what furnishings are provided and what damage is already done to the apartment. Keeping a copy of the list will help the tenant support his/her case if the landlord makes deductions for damages that were already in the apartment.

Hurt also advised tenants to find out who pays utilities. Is the tenant responsible for electricity, heat and water? Will the landlord pay some or all of them? Will the tenant be directly charged by the companies or will the landlord present the bill? This should be made clear beforehand, Hurt said.

Hurt warned that the tenant should notice in the lease whether rent raises are allowable. If the contract states that the landlord can raise the rent, he is rightfully allowed to do so. If the lease does not allow raises, then the original agreed-upon amount of rent is binding.

If rent raises are not mentioned, ask and make the agreement before any unexpected changes occur.

When looking for apartments, check to see that each one is up to housing regulations. The actual code is available at the City Hall, Hurt said, for those legal buffs who like pouring over mounds of ordinances.

If not, some of the more obvious requirements are listed on page 14 of this magazine.

In addition to making sure that the abode is up to code, the owner is responsible for extermination of insects, rodents and other pests.

He or she should also see that units are clean and sanitary before tenants move in. And ultimately, the owner is responsible for the maintenance of a clean and sanitary condition, which is why the owner depends on the tenant to keep the place up to par.

Besides the housing regulations, Hurt advised tenants to be aware of their own legal responsibilities as well as the landlord's.

Under the law, the tenant is responsible for paying the rent, keeping the apartment in good condition, which means, "not going beyond the normal wear and tear of living," Hurt said.

The landlord is responsible to keep the apartment in good condition by making repairs and keeping the apartment up to the housing code.

If a tenant believes that his/her apartment is not up to code, Hurt advised, "Call the Building Inspection...and file a complaint. If they ask you if you want a copy, always say 'yes'."

An appointment will then be set up for inspection, Hurt said. If the inspector agrees that the house is below standard, he will issue the landlord a citation.

"If the house is very bad," Hurt said, "he may condemn it, so it's good to be ready to move out."

The landlord is then legally responsible for making those repairs within a reasonable amount of time, Hurt said. Hurt advised the tenant to write a letter to the landlord stating the repairs needed.

"Keep a copy and then send it to the landlord through certified mail, return receipt requested," he said.

After allowing a reasonable amount of time, which is usually "around a week and a half to two weeks, depending on the nature of the repair," Hurt advised sending another letter telling the landlord that rent is being withheld and is being put into a separate bank account. Give the landlord a copy of the deposit slip and tell him that the rent will be paid once the repairs are done.

Hurt warned that "landlords will tell you not to (withhold rent), but you have a legal right to do this, and you can't be evicted for it."

According to Hurt, after the money has been withheld for three months, and repairs are not made, the tenant can take the landlord to court.

Going to court may sound frightening to first-time tenants, but Hurt said, "Don't be afraid to go to court because the court is there for your benefit."

Most of these kinds of complaints are handled in small claims court, Hurt said. Tenants can plead their own case since lawyers are not allowed. Hurt warned that the landlord may request the case be handled in district court so that their lawyer may plead for them.

In this situation, Hurt said, "You can go to Legal Aid, which is the best place for students to go if they have a low income," and can't afford a lawyer.

Two other legal hassles that frequently occur between tenants and landlords are eviction and refund of the security deposit.

Concerning evictions, Hurt said, "This is one thing landlords try to get away with. The landlord can't evict you—the court has to evict."

However, the landlord has the right to begin eviction proceedings if the tenant does not pay the rent, destroys his property or breaks a provision of the lease, he said.

With the security deposit refund, "Most people don't receive their security deposit...or are told they must forfeit it. This is totally illegal," Hurt said.

To get the security deposit refunded, the tenant must give the landlord a forwarding address within four days of moving out. Within 30 days, the landlord must refund the money and give an itemized list of damages if he has subtracted the costs from the original amount. If the tenant does not receive the list or the money within the 30 days, he/she can sue the landlord for twice the amount of the deposit, Hurt said.

For the tenant's protection of privacy, the landlord cannot enter the house at whim. "The landlord can't come in," said Hurt, "unless it's an emergency or unless you have a 24-hour notice and then he must come during business hours."

see ALLOW page 15

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City County Building, Ann Arbor
665-4451

OFFICES OF LEGAL SERVICES
229 Goodison
Eastern Michigan University
487-1472

LEGAL AID SOCIETY
209 E. Washington, Ann Arbor
665-6181

ANN ARBOR DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY ENGINEERING
City Hall
761-2400 ext. 271

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Checking it out. . .

As you complete the following checklist, consider these points: location and convenience, price and value, condition and attractiveness, floor plan and aesthetic design, and special features and services.

	APT. A	APT. B	APT. C
Is the apartment close to public transportation?			
Are any other buildings in the area being converted to condominiums?			
What is the monthly rent?			
Can the rent be increased during period of lease?			
What options for renewal are available at the expiration of the lease?			
Can you sublet?			
What is the amount of the security deposit?			
Who pays the utilities?			
What are the other tenants like? (age, children)			
Are pets allowed?			
Are there extra fees for: Storage space? Air conditioning? Parking space? (outdoor, indoor, covered) Television antenna connection? Use of swimming pool? Use of tennis courts?			
Is there a resident manager or superintendent?			
What are the garbage disposal facilities?			
When are the garbage collection days?			
Is there laundry equipment in the unit?			
Is the separate laundry room safe?			
What hours will you have in the laundry room?			
What are the provisions for mail and parcel delivery?			
What are the security provisions?			
Is there a lobby?			
Is there a doorman?			
Is there direct access to your unit?			
Is there an elevator? In what condition?			
Are the stairwells well-lighted?			
Are there safe fire exits?			
Is there a smoke detector system?			

before you check in

	APT. A	APT. B	APT. C
Is the general layout of the unit good?			
Is the bathroom clean?			
Is there adequate hot water supply? Pressure?			
Are there working fixtures?			
Is the kitchen clean? Adequate cupboard space? Dishwasher? Oven? Self cleaning? Stove? Refrigerator? (all parts there?) Separate door freezer compartment? Exhaust fan?			
Are drapes included?			
Is carpeting included?			
Must a certain percentage of the floor be carpeted?			
Are there sufficient electrical outlets? (Two or three per room are recommended.)			
Can the windows be opened? Are there screens?			
Will the outside of the windows be cleaned by building maintenance? How often?			
Will the unit be freshly painted before you move in?			
Are there are "house rules"? (i.e., no television or stereo at certain times)			
Is there adequate closet space?			
Is there a dead-bolt lock on the door - a through-the-door viewing aperture?			
Can you install your own door lock?			
Is the area outside your door well-lighted?			

Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area map

YPSILANTI
Superior Twp.
Ypsilanti Twp.
Ann Arbor Twp.
Superior Twp.
Pittsfield Twp.
Ypsilanti Twp.
Pittsfield Twp.
Ypsilanti Twp.
Washtenaw Community College
West Campus E M U
Ford Lake
Green Oaks Golf Course

Housing Codes

The landlord is required to keep the apartment, house or flat in good repair, and up to the standards set by the city or township building codes. Such codes may be obtained from the building safety or inspection agency in your area.

These codes cover the level of safety that a building must meet. In the Code you will also find a list of repairs and services which are needed to keep a building up to standards. They contain specifications and certain size dimensions which must be met for various size families. The procedures for condemning and assessing a low standard dwelling are also examined.

General Housing Code Requirements

1. All stairs and porches shall be safe and kept in good repair.

2. Floors, walls and ceilings must afford privacy, and shall be kept in good repair.

3. Landlord must provide screening for doors and windows in the summer months.

4. All dwellings shall have adequate heating.

5. Hot water heaters must be up to standard and should provide water not less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

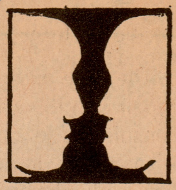
6. There should be two means of egress (fire escapes) for every dwelling.

7. Every habitable room should have window space ample enough for proper ventilation.

8. The owner of every dwelling unit shall be responsible for the extermination of insects, rodents and other pests.

10. The owner is responsible for the maintenance of a clean and sanitary condition.

OUR NEWEST FEATURE...



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No Security Deposit-
If Qualified

Allow entry for repairs

(continued from page 7)

The only exception to this rule is if the house needs repairs. In this case, Hurt advised, "You can ask him to consult you (about a reasonable time to do repairs), but it's not fair...to make him wait until you come home if he has a plumber waiting."

But Hurt also said that late at night or early in the morning are not reasonable times to do repairs.

If tenants feel that their privacy is being invaded or that they are being harassed, "the best thing to do," Hurt said, "is call us. We don't mind talking to landlords."

Since YTU acts as an "advisory referral service," they can act as a mediator while informing students of their rights, Hurt said.

One right that tenants have—the right to sublet—carries a lot of responsibility.

"You become the landlord," Hurt said. "You must follow all the laws that landlords must follow."

For example, if the tenant asks a security deposit from the subleaser to cover their own deposit, he/she must keep the money in a bank and tell the subleaser where the money is, he said.

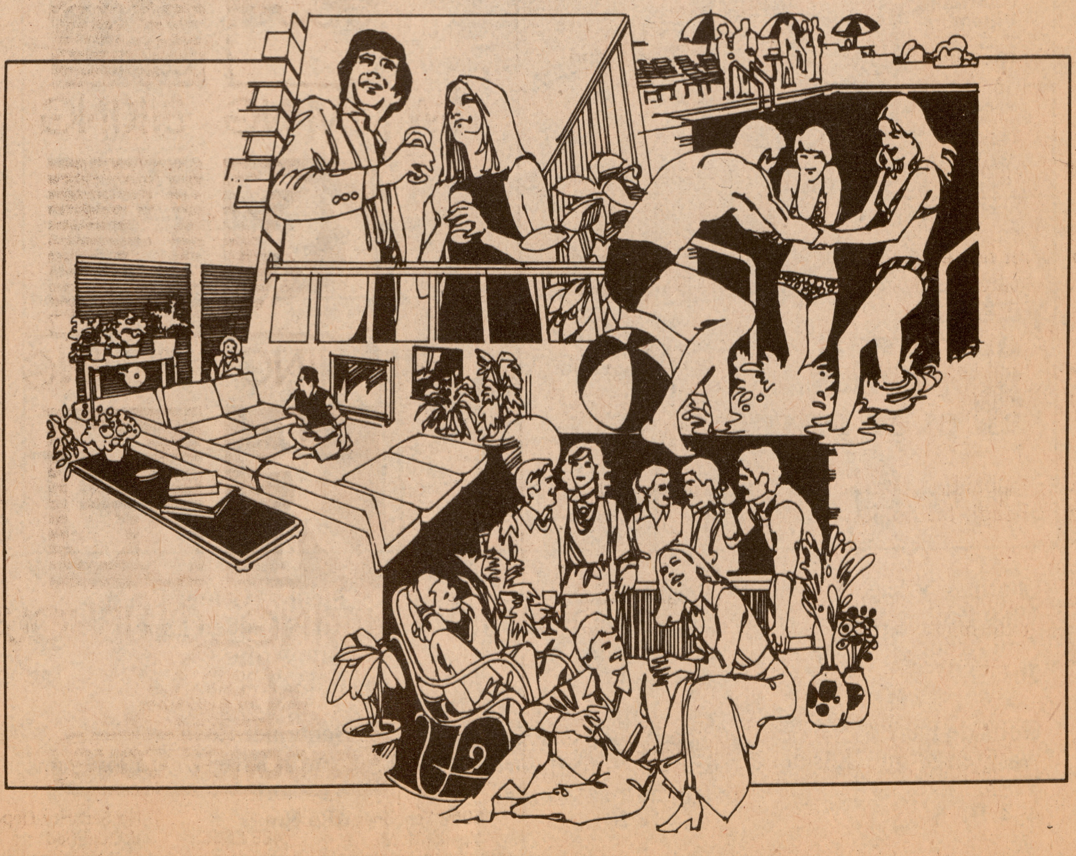
The tenant must also collect the rent from the subleaser since he/she is still ultimately responsible for payment. If the tenant and landlord agree that the landlord will collect rent from the subleaser, the agreement should be put in writing.

The tenant should also carefully screen the prospective subletters. "It's good to know them," he said, adding that it is also a good idea not to move too far from the subleased apartment in case the subletter does not fulfill his/her responsibilites.

As last warnings, Hurt advised students to "become well aware of your rights," and to come to the YTU "as soon as there's a problem."

"Most people come in after they've been served (an eviction) notice or...when the time limit has passed."

The YTU is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If the union, for some reason, is not open, tenants with questions can leave a message by calling 487-1472.



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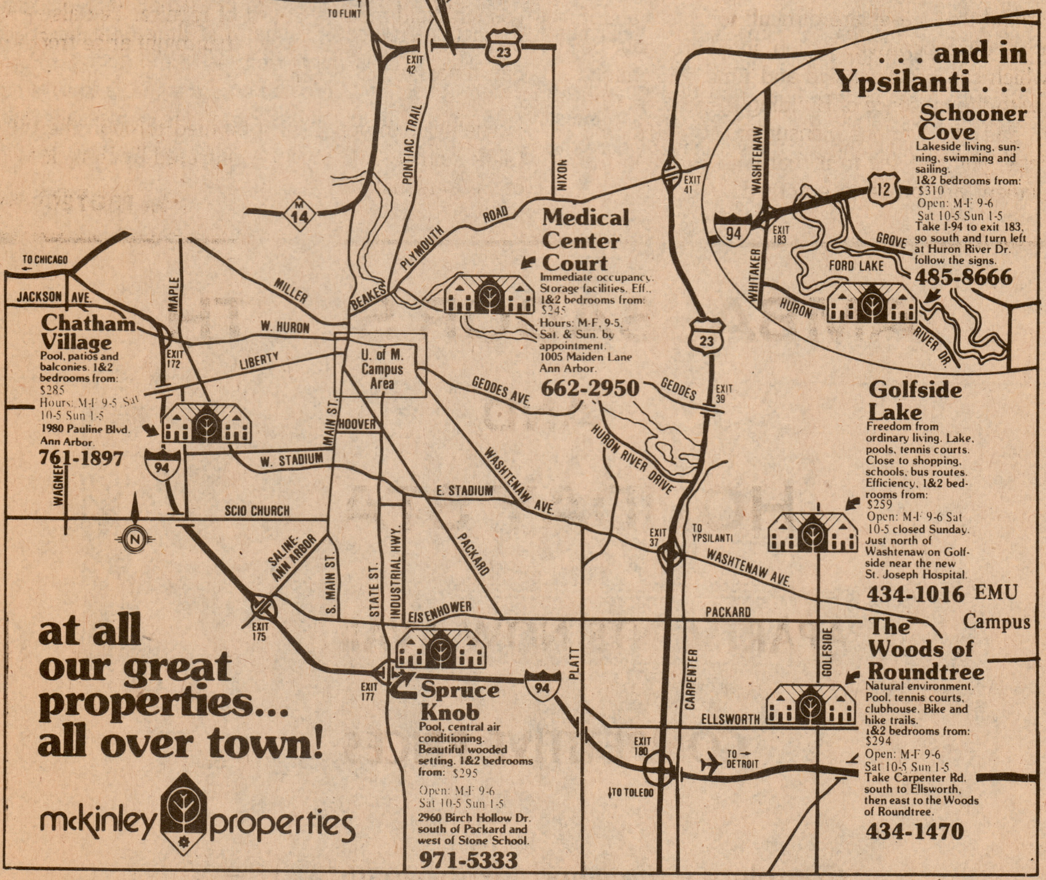

Chatham Village
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Ann Arbor
761-1897

Spruce Knob
2960 Birch Hollow Dr.
Ann Arbor
971-5333

Medical Center Court
1005 Maiden Lane
Ann Arbor
662-2950

Golfside Lake
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Ypsilanti
434-1016

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Ellsworth to the woods of
Roundtree Ypsilanti
434-1470

Schooner Cove
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Ypsilanti
485-8666

Know what your rights are

When you enter into a lease with a landlord you both become subject to certain duties. You, the lessee, are responsible for keeping the place clean and free from damages. You must also regularly pay the rent agreed on in the lease.

The landlord also has certain responsibilities to the people who rent from him. If the landlord fails in his end of the agreement or shows neglect of his duties, a "lessors breach" may occur which could lead to the breaking of the lease.

If you have a complaint that you think is legitimate, the first step would be to discuss it with your landlord and listen to his offers. If you cannot find satisfaction that way then the following information may be helpful to you in determining a course of action.

Keep in mind that leases are difficult to break, and if the lessor is uncooperative, action in court may be required which can be expensive and time consuming. However, with the presence of Building Inspectors, City Assessors, and the various consumer agencies and tenant unions, you can see to it that your rights in the lease agreement are properly enforced.

EVICTIONS

If you receive an eviction notice through the mail, it will be one of three kinds. It may be a 7 day notice to move out or pay the rent due, or it would be a 7 day notice to repair damage done by you or to eliminate health hazards caused by you. In some instances, you may just receive a 30 day notice to move out. However, if you have a lease, the landlord will have to have a good reason for evicting you.

When you receive a notice, you must decide whether or not to comply with its requests. If you decide not to, then it would be advisable to talk with a lawyer. He or she may be able to help you solve the problem with your landlord, quickly and possibly out of court.

Your landlord cannot evict you for not paying rent if you withheld the rent in lieu of repairs. You also cannot be evicted for any lawful act that might arise from every day tenancy.

The eviction notice must be filed through the County Clerk's office, and must be delivered by first class mail or by personal service.

see PROTECT page 19

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AND

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"It happened to me— be careful"

An innocent tenant is a fool asking for trouble.

A strong statement? Sure. But as a tenant entering into a binding legal commitment with a lot of fine print and little strings attached to it, you better remember it. And do something about it if you fit into that category of people.

I cannot stress to you how very important it is to know as much as possible about renting an apartment BEFORE you actually make the agreement. Although there are many good and decent landlords in this town, there are still too many around who prey on sweet unknowing or unsuspecting students.

Students who are new to the area are prime prey. Many who have made a last-minute decision to enroll and move into the student slums (as they are often called) are the primo of the prey.

They need a place to live and they need it quickly. You obviously cannot attend school and live out on the streets with books piled on suitcases. Besides being arrested for vagrancy, that situation is just not a realistic possibility.

Any intelligent person or moron knows that. So do landlords.

You are obviously at a disadvantage. They know that too.

Thus follows the typical scenario: A panicky student, desperate for an abode of his/her own, frantically searches through the classifieds, ready to take anything with a roof and a reasonable facsimile of walls. Running water is preferable.

Said student scratches down lots of phone numbers and starts the marathon. Sets up appointments. Goes and looks at apartments. All dumps. The worst of the student slums. The pits.

Slimy landlord picks up the desparate vibes. Said landlord's preying instincts heighten. The saliva does not yet drool but an impassioned, scheming look brightens in his eyes. A victim.

"How much is it?" said student asks.

Some exorbitant, outrageous price figure is casually mentioned, as if it's the going rate for bargain basement bonanzas.

"A real bargain," said landlord drawls. "It'll go fast what with the market open and all."

Said student now reaches the peak of panic. A thousand uncetainties weave and whirl in the mind. "Should I take this dump? What if I can't find anything and someone takes my last option? What if I take this and then find something better tomorrow? What if this is the best there is right now? What if? What if? What if?"

Said student takes it. And lives sorrowfully every after.

The heat doesn't work. There's no hot water. The bugs crawl in. The bugs crawl out. Inside your shower and out your spouts.

Aformentioned landlord does not return desperate student's desperate phone calls. Suppose said student is has gone bone broke from paying said exorbitant rent, and cannot afford to fix the major plumbing problems that have backed up the drains, but not the bugs. Tough luck, Charlie, you blew it.

Have I scared you enough yet? Well let me tell you something. In most cases, this is an exaggeration. In some cases, and with the landlord's character pattern, I am speaking from personal experience (this is an understatement). It happened to me. And who is to say that *YOU* will not be the next victim?

I'm telling it to you straight: KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GETTING INTO! Know something about your landlord. Ask around before it you suspect your landlord of being a no-good, low-down dirty dealer. Better yet, if you suspect, don't let (that's the lingo in the trade, meaning "to rent.")

Be safe——it's your best bet. And read the advice in this magazine. It's for your benefit. Take advantage of it!

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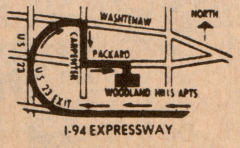

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Protect your damage deposit

(continued from page 17)

DAMAGE DEPOSITS

There are certain rules concerning security deposits for all leases. The following are important points of the law.

1. You are entitled to receive two copies of an inspection sheet when you move in. Check these over and return one to the landlord within seven days.

2. Any damage deposits and prepaid rents which you pay before moving in cannot exceed 1½ times the regular monthly rent.

3. Within the first 14 days of residence you must receive an address from your landlord. This is the address to use for any questions or inquiries concerning your damage deposit.

4. The landlord is limited as to what he can withhold from your security deposit. Money can only be used to pay for back rents, unpaid utilities, and for any damages which you are actually responsible for.

5. Upon moving out, you must leave a forwarding address with your landlord. Within 30 days you should receive a check for your deposit accompanied with an itemized explanation of any deduction which have been withheld. You have seven days in which to act upon this. If you do not agree with the damages which have been claimed you should either return the check to the landlord or start suit within 45 days after you move out.

6. If your landlord does not send you the itemized list within 30 days, it means that you are entitled to the entire security deposit.

If you have any questions at all, pertaining to security deposits, first talk with your landlord, then seek outside advice. Do not hesitate to question security deposits. Some landlords use such deposits as added income because the tenant is uninformed.

SMALL CLAIMS COURT

If you cannot get your damage deposit back, or you feel that your landlord owes you money for some other reason, you may sue him in small claims court for up to $300. You can do it yourself quickly, without a lawyer.

see LEGAL page 21

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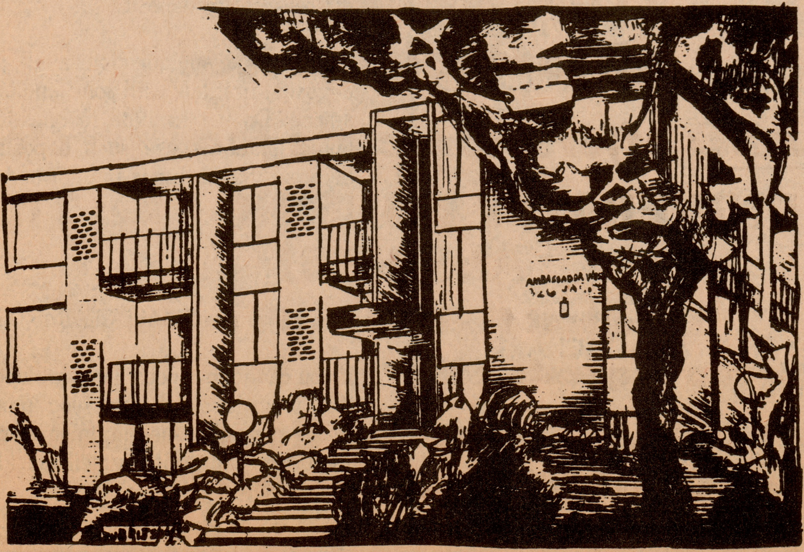

Legal action, what to do

(continued from page 19)

First you must file a claim against your landlord. This can be done at the district court office in the area in which your landlord rents. The cost for filing and for a summons by registered mail is minimal. Next, you must appear at the hearing which will take place about 30 days after you file suit.

The small claims courts in Washtenaw County are set up in five different places. There are two courts in Ann Arbor and one in Ypsilanti, Chelsea and Saline.

If you are not sure where to file a claim, contact the County Clerk's office in Ann Arbor. Do not hesitate to take a matter to small claims court; they are set up for your benefit. Lawyers are not permitted in this courtroom, so the setting is very informal. If you are in the right, and if you present a valid argument, you will find that the judge will make the landlord pay the amount for which you are suing, plus the court costs.

If you and your landlord decide to settle the matter out of court, MAKE SURE THAT YOU GET IT IN WRITING. Have any of the terms to the agreement spelled out and both of you should sign it. File a copy with the court in order to make it enforceable by law.

The landlord may elect to have the matter tried in a regular court where he will be entitled to have a lawyer. You will be notified of this decision. It is unlikely that he will choose to do so, because of the court costs and legal fees which this move would require.

In any event, seek advice before you take action in court. You may find that the landlord is legally correct, and that there are other legal remedies to your situation.

REPAIRS

Your landlord is responsible for any repairs which he promised to do before you move in and also any which are mentioned in the lease. The landlords responsibilities do not end there, he also must complete any repairs necessary to meet the Housing Code requirements.

see MAKE page 22

Rooms For Rent

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- ***Comfortable***
- ***Reasonably priced***

AND offers complete food service?

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DON'T DELAY! Contact the Housing/Food Service Office (487-1300) for all the details.

Make your landlord work

(continued from page 21)

If your landlord fails to make necessary repairs within a reasonable period there are certain steps you can take. You can contact a building inspector to look over the repairs which you desire. This will put some pressure on the landlord to make the needed repairs. You can contact a building inspector by calling the local department of Bulding Safety and Inspection. If your landlord still fails to make repairs you can deposit your rent money in a separate bank account and give the landlord a copy of the deposit slip. You cannot then be sued for nonpayment of back rent. Inform the landlord that once repairs are made, rent will be paid. Doing this would protect you if he took the matter to court. Seek advice before pursuing this course of action for repair work.

MOVING OUT

If you rent your dwelling on a monthly basis, you must give one month notice before moving out. If you have a lease for a year or so, it might be necessary to bring action in court to cancel the lease before the expiration date. To do so, it would be wise to first seek legal advice such as that offered by the organization listed in this magazine.

An alternative to the cancellation of the lease, would be to sublet to another person. Keep in mind that when you do this you are still responsible for the apartment. If any damage is done it can still come out of your damage deposit. Before you sublet, inform your landlord of your intentions to see if you can or cannot do this.

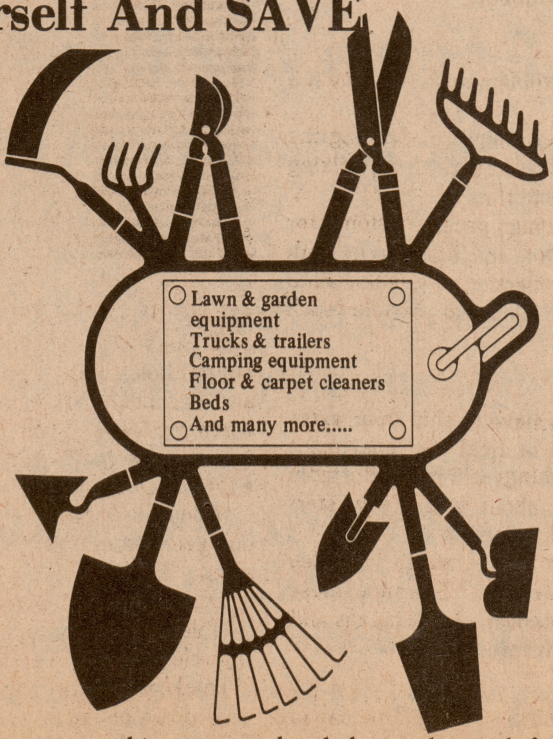
When you have a lease up to a certain date and move out before that date you will still be required to pay the full rent agreed upon in the lease unless you come to a proper agreement with the landlord.

You are also entitled to receive the balance of your damage deposit once you move out.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LANDLORDS

The landlord has certain responsibilities which he must follow according to the law. Many of his specific duties will be spelled out in the lease. These would include any provision as to the payment of utilities or repairs or services to be done.

Don't Let Inflation Eat Away Your Pockets, Do It Yourself And SAVE



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Plan ahead to avoid hassles

Along with all of the legalities and things to watch out for during apartment selection, there is one area that is often overlooked—the hidden demons.

These little critters can crop up anytime and are difficult to predict.

Following are a few of the hidden demons—the "why didn't I think of that befores:"

• *ROOMMATE SELECTION*—no small task and perhaps the largest factor in apartment living. Don't just know who you're going to live with—get to really know them.

Do they like to type until 3 a.m.? Is their smoking going to bother you when it gets in your clothes? Do they like to invite relatives over for the month?

Talk to the person you're considering living with and listen to what they're saying to you.

• *SECURITY*—Sure, you've checked the locks. But have you checked how well lit the parking area is? Visit your prospective apartment at night.

Will you be able to see visitors before admitting them?

While being afraid of heights might run in your family, it is often considered wise to live anywhere but on the ground level if that option is available. Break-ins are less likely in an upper level living area. And if a break-in does occur there, intruders will have to break in through the door, in plain sight of your neighbors.

• *PARKING*—It may not be a problem now, but give it a few months.

Does your apartment manager intend on cleaning the parking lot following next January's blizzard? Is walking to campus going to become important to you?

Also, is it going to become usual custom for commuters to park in your spot, forcing you to park elsewhere and acquire a fine collection of tickets? Find out now how your manager plans to handle such problems.

• *EXTRA STORAGE*—Will you have to ship your extra belongings back to Waukegan or does the apartment have available area? Sure your things will fit comfortably in the living area. But how about when you start multiplying by two or three roommates?

• *PLANTS*—What kind of light and humidity will they receive in your prospective apartment? Examine these options now. Start visualizing placement of belongings and plants in the apartment as you inspect it.

• *LATE NIGHT JUNK FOOD RUNS*—At any time day or night the urge might hit you for a Hershey's bar or a twelve pack and chips. Are corner stores important to you? How close is the nearest store to your prospective residence? How well lit are the routes to and from the store at night?

• *EXCESS DAMAGES*—After moving in, try to plan additions to your apartment that will do two things: first, not put holes in the wall that you'll have to pay for later; and secondly, not increase the apartment's potential when you leave. If you are paying for the addition, make it mobile so that you can take it with you.

• *LANDLORD*—the most important of all considerations.

If you don't like the vibes coming from him or her, don't rent from them. In the coming months, you will be asking this person to perform services for you. If your relationship is not at least on a basically friendly basis, trouble is ahead if your heat goes on the blink, if your sink clogs up or your ventilation fan goes kaput.

Think before you move in. Write all your considerations down on paper and examine them over and over. Talk to people who have previously lived in apartments, and, if possible, the same complex you are planning on moving into.

Save yourself grief later, by spending some extra time now.

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